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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS ASK TROIKA TO
PRESSURE BELGRADE

Classified By: CDA ALEX LASKARIS FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On August 20 families of Kosovo Albanians missing since the 1998-99 conflict asked local Troika representatives, made up of Charge, Russian Charge Kurbatskiy, and ICOPT head Jonsson, to pressure Belgrade to unlock its files and reveal the fate of their relatives. The Troika assured the family association representatives that theirs is a pressing humanitarian issue it plans to vigorously pursue. This is a highly emotional and intractable issue, and progress will require engagement with both Kosovar and Serbian authorities. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Families of missing Kosovo Albanians are organized regionally and represented by the umbrella Coordination Council of Families of Missing Persons from Kosovo (CCFMP). During the Troika's August 11 visit to Pristina, CCFMP staged a protest displaying photos of missing loved ones and requested a meeting with the Troika. The resulting August 20 meeting included CCFMP head Haki Kasumi and members from Mitrovica, Klina, Pristina, and Suhareke. Local Troika participants included Charge, who hosted the event, ICOPT officials Jonas Jonsson and Frank Neisse (EU), and Russian Charge Vladislav Kurbatskiy.

¶3. (SBU) CCFMP made one principle request: that the Troika pressure Belgrade to open its archives and reveal the fate of the missing. According to Kasumi, CCFMP has obtained documents that suggest Serbian forces kept detailed records of where missing Kosovo Albanians were buried. Dissatisfied with the results produced by both local and international authorities thus far, with the fates of 2,047 people still unresolved, Kasumi urged the Troika to do its utmost to spur progress on the issue. He stressed that peaceful coexistence between Serbia and Kosovo will not be possible until perpetrators are brought to justice. (NOTE: Serbia's files, briefly opened by former Serbian PM Zoran Djindjic, snapped shut immediately following his assassination in 2003. END NOTE.)

¶4. (SBU) Speaking on behalf of the Troika and reading from points negotiated during the Troika visit, Charge said that the issue of the missing had been a topic of discussion and

would continue to be a priority. EU representative Jonsson told the CCFMP that EU troika rep Ischinger was impressed by their protest and wanted to pursue this urgent humanitarian issue. Russian representative Kurbatskiy echoed Jonsson's comments.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Greater transparency and cooperation on the issue of the missing is something that both parties could put on the table without prejudice to their positions on final status. The politicization of this issue in the present climate stymies progress; if the climate were to improve, that same politicization could help resolve the 2,000 cases.
LASKARIS